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C O N T E N T S

FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

Competition and the Rural Church in the United States

Albert Emanuel Raugust

The Absolute in the Life of Jesus

Clifford Oliver Simpson

The Technique of Personality Readjustment in
Religious Education

Harold Reynolds Warner

The Worth of the Person

Lester Vernon Wiley

Competition
And The Rural Church
In The United States

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B. S. Whitman College, 1928

Thesis
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Introduction.

For a long while I have been interested in the progress and helpfulness of the church in our rural sections. I am most of all interested because I was born and raised in comparatively small towns.

I was born in a town of about five thousand, and was taken to the ranch as a baby. When I was eight my family moved to a town of about twenty-five thousand. At fifteen we moved about three miles from this town to live on a small farm, from which I came to Berkeley three years ago.

All my life I have known country people and have been very much interested in the work they did and the way they did it. Especially in the last eight years I have been old enough to realize the terrible anguish and discouragement that have come to the people in the country as a result of the failure of the crops to bring returns. One year the frost would take the crops, another the dry spells would take a toll and if neither of these would hinder an abundant crop, there would be no market for it. As a result of these conditions thousands have lost everything they possessed, and this very often through no fault of their own.

Throughout all of this discouraging situation the

church has stood by, almost deaf to the call and blind to see the need. The Christian Church through its weakened condition has not been able to show a united front in helping to solve some of the farmers' problems.

I believe that there is still a great deal of good in the church. I know that it can yet prove to be a greater blessing to society than it has ever been. I am going to try to give myself in the best way I can, to make the rural church take its proper place in the lives of our rural Americans. Because of this interest and background I have given myself to this work and undertaken to write this thesis.

This thesis is not a complete treatise on the subject under any circumstances. In fact it is only a beginning of the study which I have planned and have been making. This is to be followed by another which is necessarily a complement of this.

Semester I

Changed Conditions in the Rural Church

I

Changed Conditions in the Rural Church.

For me there has always been a deep thrill in the work of a small church in which the neighbors all met. I can recall how I used to go to church with my father and mother from the time I was very small. In fact I cannot remember anything else which takes me back quite so far. In those days the church meant more than merely a place to go on Sunday and then to be forgotten throughout the week. We looked forward to Sunday throughout the entire week. No one among the farmers near our ranch thought it too far to drive four or five miles in a buggy in order to get to church. Unlike today, the children also were taken to the church by their parents. Not even the tiniest were left at home.

Everyone came to church because he liked it. It was not that there were great social times advertised to interest people in the churches. Of course people were interested in seeing each other on Sunday. They knew that on Sunday they could see the entire neighborhood assembled at church for the church was the chief place for social contact.

It seems that the rural church has lost a great por-

tion of the influence which it once had. Certainly it has lost the unique place that it once held in the minds and hearts of the people. To what extent this is due to the people and to what extent to the church is not ascertainable. There are many factors which enter into the problem. All the information that I could find on the subject I have attempted to set forth in the present paper.

Warren H. Wilson in his book "The Farmer's Church" says that before 1890 the country was all we knew. The entire country was, practically speaking, rural. There were no such great centers of population as we know today. By 1892 however, there was literature in New England telling of how the farms were being deserted. Men started writing in a distressed mood about rural conditions. Schools and churches were being closed because of the exodus of people from the New England countryside. Social decay soon set in. There were desolate homes, neglected fields, divided homes, and a degenerated stock of humans. Weeds grew up about the church for the old caretakers passed away and no one else was interested enough to keep the grounds about the church looking trim. Preaching was carried on in many places only in the summertime. The church which had once been the backbone of rural life had fallen into disuse.

The conditions did not change very much of themselves, and it was a question what might be done to help the situation solve itself. It was not, however, until Roosevelt's

presidency that any great interest was taken to find the causes and cure for this state of affairs. Rural church surveys were started. Not only were these surveys interesting to those who were directly connected with the work, but the entire country became interested.

Immediately there were movements on foot to make the rural churches forces in their communities. The community church idea grew up as a result of these surveys. David R. Piper of Excelsior Springs, Missouri, who championed the community church cause found that there were 713 such churches in June 1923 and of these only 103 were found to be denominational. The greater number he declares to be outside sectarian connection or affiliation, being organized without religious prejudice for the service of social communities.¹

In the minds of many men it seemed to be the only thing that would restore the church of Jesus Christ to the place of dignity which it should rightfully hold. Many concluded from the very start of these surveys and investigations that sectarian competition was at the root of the inability of the church to exert its influence upon individual lives and upon society. It was felt that the reason for the ebb tide in rural society was in large degree the fact that the churches were not united in service. Each

¹Wilson--- "The Farmer's Church". p.8

denomination had many small churches which had to be closed as soon as a portion of the people moved from the community. The idea had been conceived that as long as the people need the church and religion, they might better have a church which was strong enough to be able to remain. In speaking of these community or cooperating churches Wilson says that their dispersion throughout the land indicates a general interest among Americans in the usefulness of religion. This is indeed new. Our religion has never before been dominated by utility. Previous generations were bound into denominations by common convictions. These churches put supreme above all other binding ties the one principle of utility: To make the church to serve.¹

The help that the rural church program has gotten from interested people all over the nation has in many cases made for a much more useful country church. Country people are just as human as people in the city can ever hope to be. Some think that they are much more peculiar. They have their ways of doing things, it is true; but they make it possible for the rest of the world to live. And the fact that more and more people go to the city proves that the farm produces more people and crops than it needs. "Ever fewer farmers produce ever more and more."²

The amount of work that has been done, however, has

¹Wilson---"The Farmer's Church". p.27

²Ibid. p.30

really not scratched the surface as yet. There are thousands upon thousands of churches which are not community enterprises and which make the problems of the rural church very grave ones. A great deal of study and cooperative endeavor has to be given to the rural church situation before we can say that we have done our best.

The fact remains that competition is being fostered by the bishops and secretaries from the cities, who do not know how best to help the rural church. The interest of denominations in the past has been to build up strong organizations and to have many members and a great number of churches. As a result many churches which are not doing a constructive work are kept alive to make large membership reports for the denominations. Unseemly conditions are revealed, such as appear in the statement that the denominations seem now to be sending their stronger men to the weaker churches in the overchurched community and their weaker ministers to the promising field where there is no other church.¹

Most efforts toward cooperation to date have been outside denominational circles.

"No communion makes cooperation with other bodies a regular part of its work as all of them make extension a regular objective. I hope to see in the future a plan of comity proposed not alone by a federation, which has no authority,

¹Wilson-- "The Farmer's Church". p. 201.

but by a conference, an association, a classis, or a presbytery, in which resides the power of Protestants to act. Suppose, for instance, one of these governing bodies should after discussion of the situation within its bounds decide a program about as follows, which its ministers must announce in communities suffering from denominational competition:

1. This church ministers in this community in competition with fellow churches of like tradition with ourselves unwillingly.

2. We find that summary withdrawal from the community is impractical.

3. This congregation therefore makes the following offer: conditional upon their acceptance by other (specified) congregations:

a. We unite with other like churches in as many services of worship in the round of the year and in the course of the week as possible.

b. We offer to unite with others (specified) in maintaining a common Sunday School.

4. We offer to federate this church with any other of like faith and tradition on the following terms:

a. The churches federated shall enter with equal rights, each preserving its integrity in a local congregation. This local congregation may be visited by the local denominational superintendents; its component members shall be reported each to his own denomination regularly. Each member of the federated church may contribute to the denomination of his choice and the regular contributions for benevolences shall be distributed to the denominations entering into the federation in equal parts. Each congregation shall regularly function, under the leadership of the pastor to be chosen by all.

b. The control of all local expenses shall be in the federated congregation as a whole, which shall meet at least once a year for the election of common officers and the determination of questions that concern the community and the congregation. One minister shall be appointed to have charge of the congregation and he shall be chosen freely by the federated church as a body.

5. This congregation, in view of the situation, offers whenever a like offer is made by one, two, or more (specified) congregations serving the community to hold a meeting in common with them, officially announced, at which shall be determined the future of the work of these congregations in this community."¹

"If any denomination were to commit itself, through one of its authoritative bodies, to such a program of comity, it would disarm criticism, it would win to itself many adherents who are impatient of the present competitive system, and it would break the deadlock in certain communities, as well as save monies now expended in hopeless competition, and the energies of pastors that are spent in humiliating strife. Above all, the church officials should realize that the strain upon ministers who are called on to serve in competitive fields is beyond the endurance of the human spirit. Religion cannot survive in the hearts of men who are commanded by their church to minister in country towns where there are too many churches and where competition rather than cooperation is made the Christian duty."²

This is so new a thing in many circles, especially among the old time officials of the denominations, as to be almost altogether ignored by them. It is very true that many people are seeing the necessity for a new program of community loyalty rather than loyalty to a church that is dividing the community. By the procedure as it has been carried on the minister as well as his church is placed in a peculiar situation. Why cannot the church of the open country and of the village demand the respect that it should have? Rural leadership is worthy of recognition,

¹Wilson-- "The Farmer's Church". p. 203.

²Ibid. p.204.

surely.¹ Thousands of people move from the country to the city annually and become the members of the city churches. It is common knowledge that a great proportion of all the ministers come from the country. From this point of view alone it can easily be seen why the rural church should be a constructive, living church and not a degenerated, struggling and dying one. It should be a spring of sparkling water free from contamination.

"Clergy and laity should have an appreciation for the pivotal importance of the country parish.....The church can keep its population flow to the city pure as it keeps pure its water supply."²

The importance of looking out for a good source of supply of the population of the city has been overlooked however. The churches from which such a great proportion of ministers come should have the most intelligent and helpful ministers. On the contrary they have the poorest ministers. Besides this there are very few ministers who make a special study of the rural situation with the idea of serving a rural community throughout their lives. There is a strong tendency among them to consider the country parish as merely a stepping stone. The parish they really want is not in the country. They want to go to the city the first time opportunity presents itself.

¹O'Hara-- "The Church and the Country Community". p.55.

²Ibid. p.11.

Many American people seem to have the idea that the country is after all a rather unnecessary portion of the nation. They like to go to the country for a week-end or for a summer vacation; and when they go there they want to set their tents where they want to; and they take the privilege of throwing their paper and other refuse just where they want. They don't know the hardships of the country people; nor do they seem to understand that private property lines do not end when one gets outside the corporate boundary of the city. Most of the books about country folk are written by people who are not in the country. False notions are perpetrated by books written by city people about them. Someone has taken H. Paul Douglass' statement that "more than half of all our American people are in the city and more are coming every hour", and changed it to this: "More than half of all our American people are in the city and the rest are on the way." I have no doubt that many think this to be the actual case. Of course a thinking person could never say such a thing.

The fact is this, that there are millions of people who live and labor on our farms. It is they who hold up the super-structure of our highly specialized city and industrial life. They not only produce almost everything we eat and wear, but also furnish us with a good share of everything else that we use in our industry. Not only have

there been millions on our farms in the past, but there will continue to be millions there as long as there are the large cities to be supplied with raw products and foods. The United States Census statistics tell a story somewhat as follows: Between 1910 and 1920 the rural population increased 1,599,871 and since 1880 it increased 15,610,410. These government reports include as rural, only places under 2500 population. Of course city growth has been faster; but part of the city's growth comes from the country. The 1920 census was the first to show a greater urban population than rural.¹

The farmer in extent occupies 99% of the area of the United States.

"Dr. Galpin, who is in charge of the Division of Farm Population and Rural Life, of the United States Department of Agriculture says, 'There are 4,000,000 more children among the 30,000,000 of farm people, under 21 years of age than there are among any 30,000,000 of city people..... the country contains the children of the nation, and the city-- the stamping ground of business and adults-- abhors children as nature abhors a vacuum'. My story will not reach home, however, unless one pauses a moment to let this census fact soak in. Here is an excess of children living on our farms that would make a small nation-- bigger than Switzerland, bigger than Chili, than Norway, than famous little Denmark. And what will become of this excess of children? What else than this? The farm will manage to feed them clothe them, educate them until they come of age, when, possessed of a strong right arm they will turn their backs on the farm and farming, and go to recruit the nerve-fagged industry of cities.

¹O'Hara--"The Church and the Country Community". p.27.

The farms feed industry, professional service, and city life with muscle, intellect and imagination."¹

The city imports most of its population from elsewhere. To every six people there have been added three more; only one of them is city born. The country and foreign lands supply the other two.²

It makes a great deal of difference whether the religious and moral background of these people who finally make up our city population has been good or bad. H. Paul Douglass goes so far as to say that religious faith does not commonly originate in the city because human life which peoples it does not. The former President of the University of Washington, Dr. Henry Suzzallo was quoted as having said that public school education, grade, high school, and college, without proper religious instruction is a detriment to a person.³ Dean Weigle of Yale is quoted as saying that the Sunday School teachers of our nation have done more for the improvement of America than have our statesmen.⁴ To me it seems that it would pay to ask how the religious training of these millions of country people is carried on; whether in a selfish, self-seeking machine or in a fair and worshipful church which has as its ideal the

¹Green-- "Conditions of the Rural Church". p.5

²Ibid. p.8.

³Ibid. p.8.

⁴Ibid. p.9

Kingdom of God in the hearts of all men. We need not go far from Berkeley to see the results of competition.

This group of our citizens of which I have been speaking has had many difficulties in the past, in their economic life; this is largely responsible for the condition of the church in the country. For instance, in 1919 the total agricultural income of the United States was nine and a half billion dollars, and in 1921 the total income was four billion dollars, or a decline of 60%.¹ In some sections, says Brunner, the decline was as high as 85%. The period was one of depression but farmers were hit the hardest. Scores of companies have regained their losses of 1920-21. Even the penniless country ministers know General Motors 50% and United States Steel 40% stock dividends.² In the same period farm prices went down as much as 40%. Agriculture, our largest industry, with more capital invested and more persons employed than any other, has had no such dividends.³

Farmers have always been loyal citizens and have always answered in their best way to the call of the nation. When we entered the World War in 1916 the farmers were called upon to go every possible inch they could to produce

¹Brunner-- "The Church and the Agricultural Crisis". p.1

²Ibid. p.1.

³Ibid. p.1.

more crops. In every rural post-office in the country they were met with posters telling them that "Food Will Win the War". The newspapers and magazines were full of the same message; schools and pulpits were used for the same propaganda. The farmers went the limit to bring marginal lands under cultivation. The cost to them was great but they did it. Even after the armistice had been signed, our government urged the farmers to raise larger crops because the need was still greater than ever before. But before these crops could be harvested the depression was on. Corn dropped from over two dollars per bushel to where it was cheap fuel, and today it sells for eighty cents per bushel. Wheat fell from three dollars and a quarter to one dollar per bushel. Wool fell from sixty cents to twenty cents a pound, raisins from ten cents to two and one half cents.

As a result of this many people were forced to leave the farms because they could not make enough to live upon. Thousands upon thousands of land owners lost their property as a result of the depression. They had put into productive channels every available cent, as the government requested. As soon, however, as they failed to receive returns as they had a right to expect, they were no longer able to meet their obligations. Only one thing remained to do and that was to get out. These figures by Brunner in his "The Church and the Agricultural Crisis" show us how the

farm debts rose in fifteen years. In 1910 the farm debt was one billion, seven hundred million dollars. By 1920 it had increased to four billion, eight hundred million. By 1925 it had increased to nine billion dollars. These facts and many others which cannot all be enumerated here have helped to make the farmer generally discouraged. The church according to Brunner, had hardly recognized the problem. He feels that both local and national church leaders must consider the general economic situation when building their financial programs.¹

In the past too much of the religious work among the rural populations has been done with no aim whatsoever of solving the problems which these people have. It has been a religious program which to a large extent has been inflicted upon them. All over the country we see tiny struggling churches which in the time of most stress upon the nerve and moral fiber of the farmers, have to be closed because they have not sufficient funds. It is no wonder at all that many people on the land do not go to church nor do they hold it in esteem. The church of the past has been weakest when it has been needed most.

As has been said before and as P. M. Sims says,

"Man is a social being and in more primitive

¹Brunner-- "The Church and the Agricultural Crisis". p.3.

days the country church furnished very largely the means of gratifying the social instincts. It was then the center of social life and as such it was a mighty factor for good."¹

There is no reason why the church of Jesus Christ should not lead the people in rural districts in spiritual, moral, social, and recreational ways; in fact if it will not do so it will continue to lead only a few of the people. It can under its present regime lead only those who are satisfied with the present status, and will always continue to be satisfied with it. I am interested in the rural church because I believe that in the future the rural church is going to fit itself into its new place as the city church has been able to do to a certain extent. It is going to be done, I hope, not by a revolt from the bishops and superintendents and others in authority, but in cooperation with them. It is true that they have too often times looked at the country situation through glasses which were tinted with the city problems. Many indeed view the country with a understanding spirit. Possibly they will help the rest of our city brethren to see the problems in the right light.

P. M. Sims says this:

"Because the welfare of the church as a whole, in the future as in the past is inseparably bound up with the prosperity of the country church, no discussion of the unity of Protestantism is satisfactory that does not consider at least briefly its problems. No more vital prob-

¹Sims-- "What Must the Church Do to Be Saved?" p.81

len confronts the church today; they that present-
ted by the church in the country."¹

¹ Sims--"What Must the Church Do to Be Saved?". p. 61

Chapter II

Divisions and Effects

II

It will help us in this study if we view some of the facts with regard to the actual conditions in our rural church. These conditions are very largely due to the policy that has been followed by the denominations in the past. We did not start with a powerless rural church in this country, as we have already noticed. Today, however, the report about our rural church is different than it once was. It has been a very few years comparatively in which so much has happened that has tended to divide Christendom more and more. This country is not very old, but in less than three hundred years we have been divided into over two hundred sects and denominations. Not every one of them had its genesis or origin in this country, but most of them did. It is very strange that in a nation founded upon such principles as ours is, there should not be more understanding and harmony among its Christian people. Of course the early fathers of this nation came here so they might have religious freedom. I am afraid, however, that if it is necessary to go as far as we have gone in splitting up to gain freedom, this freedom becomes a terrible burden and we must now view the matter from another point of vantage. I also hope

that as the pendulum swings in the direction of unity, it does not swing so far as to take away any of our motivating force.

"Looking back to the earliest New England Colonies we are impressed by the unity which existed. The Puritans came to America, not to separate from the English church, but establish a pure form of that church. They wanted to remain one."¹

This was a reformation from the inside. It was more effective than reformation from the outside has ever been. While community worship on the frontier was breaking down sectarian differences, non-denominational "Female Societies" to further missionary work were being formed in the east. Good non-denominational literature was supplied by the American Tract Society, and the American Bible Society and American Sunday School Union were further evidence of the feeling of unity in the work.² Then when the splitting up into denominations was first in the air, everything possible was done to forestall its popularity. One is forced to try if one can find out how from such a spirit of unity the present disunion could possibly have come. Surely rivalry is everywhere to be found today. It is to be seen in such forms as cut the very heart out of the gospel that these competing churches are trying to propagate.

In 1838 the General Synod of the Lutheran Church in

¹Winsor-- "The Country Church a Socializing Institution".p.6.

²Ibid. p.11.

the United States tried to bring about a denominational union but the influence of the slavery question split things up worse than ever before.¹ As a board swells and splits when it is wet, so the denominations were split. Slavery alone, however, was not all the difficulty. Even much greater than the different opinions about the slavery question were the differences in theological viewpoint of the various denominations. They were interested in advancing their own respective views and of course wanted others to believe exactly as they believed. Disagreement between various theological views caused explosions which tore great wounds in communities. People became so antagonized by their brethren of other views than their own that they were no longer on speaking terms one with the other. Camp meetings came more and more to be used for the promulgation of special theological views. Often times the views of theologians became paramount and the saving of souls was a secondary matter. Isolated communities became storm centers of denominational battles very largely because of the lack of other more important or interesting things to do. Sectarian attitudes grew very strong. This, of course, caused the rush of the various denominations to nearly every available spot on the earth with the idea of gaining all possible members before some other group should be able

¹Winsor-- "The Country Church a Socializing Institution" p.11

to get a church started and enroll the available supply of people. Bitter rivalry which was the antithesis of Christianity, went on. As Mr. Winsor states, school teachers were chosen according to church affiliation. The merit of the teacher was of secondary importance, his theology came first. It was feared that if a teacher held the wrong sort of theological views he might contaminate the entire community. Of course with all of these differences in theology there sprang up colleges and seminaries, varying as to their teaching according to the churches starting them. These colleges also did a great deal in the line of proselyting from other denominations. In short one's status as a Christian did not depend nearly so much upon the life one lived as it did upon the views of theology one held; and this is by no means over yet.

All this brings us to a closer study of conditions as they now exist. Possibly one reason why people are not very much alarmed about the religious situation the country over, and especially in the rural sections, is due to the fact that there has been until the present so little material available for the general run of people, to let them know what the situation actually is. No doubt also a great factor in the case is that the official organs of the various denominations have been unwilling to admit the faults of their respective denominations. But I feel that right

now the light is beginning to be seen by more people than we imagine and in the near future as never before there will be shown the real brotherhood spirit. It is because I believe that if intelligent people see what the program of the past has done, they will cease supporting and feeding it, that I undertake to picture in so many ways the scenes which we see all about us in rural America.

"The best way to judge religious efficiency is the attitude of the community toward it. This attitude is most clearly indicated by the support it gives the church.....Of all the town and country churches studied, a little less than six out of ten are growing. The colonial (region) has the lowest average. Less than one half of the churches are growing."¹

Only in the west as many as two thirds of the churches grew in the decade 1916 to 1926, say Morse and Brunner. In all the older settled sections of America churches were planted to serve men who walked or drove oxen. We have not developed a system of church location for the present. Distance is much less of an obstacle today.

"Nevertheless, we are left with churches planted as though distance were the one insurmountable obstacle to church success. Thus through large areas the very multiplicity of churches makes the struggle for survival a very real one. A considerable portion of the churches of these areas are so seriously cramped that they have no real opportunity for growth. They are foredoomed to remain small and weak and handicapped by their inability to develop an adequate program, a disadvantage which is bound to become more serious as the demand upon churches increases. This tendency may be shown by dividing

¹Morse and Brunner-- "The Town and Country Church in the U.S"

the churches according to the average number of people per church in the community."¹

The larger the churches the greater is the proportion of them which grow. This is true for every region and for nearly every county. The percentages are as follows according to Morse and Brunner:

"46% of the churches under 250 people grow.
58% of the churches between 251 and 500 people grow.
66% of the churches between 501 and 1000 people grow.
76% of the churches over 1000 grow."²

Morse and Brunner based their remarks upon a study of one hundred and seventy nine counties chosen from the nation at large. These counties are not picked because of some peculiarity but because they represent the problem as it is found all over the country. Of course these counties are all very largely rural, because the study is of the church in the country. The study considered only those towns which had five thousand people or less.

"The three thousand and forty nine counties of the United States have in them fifteen hundred and thirteen cities of five thousand people or more. With Washington D. C. these include 46.8% of the total population of continental United States. The colonial region is 72% urban; the Pacific region is 57% urban; the mid-west area is 54% urban; the south is 33% urban and the range region is 30% urban."³

Town and country population in 1920 was nearly fifty

¹Morse and Brunner--"Town and Country Church in the U.S." p.98

²Ibid. p.97

³Ibid. p.99

six million or over 53% rural. It has only been within the last ten years that urban population has become equal to rural population. This is rather striking because when people speak of the rural sections they refer to them as though there were only a few people left outside the cities.

The total number of communities (according to Morse and Brunner) in town or open country is seventy three thousand two hundred and thirty. Of them twenty thousand five hundred and five are open country communities. Seven tenths of them are in the south. One fourth of the Pacific communities are of the open country type. From this we can easily see what proportion of the rural communities are of the open country type and how many are of the village type. The total number of town and country churches is one hundred one thousand, four hundred seventy seven. Of these 5.6% are in towns, 30.7% are in villages, while 63.7% are in hamlets or open country places. In the United States as a whole rural communities fall into the following classes: 8.2% are towns, 20.5% are villages, 7.4% are hamlets and 63.9% are in the open country. According to Morse and Brunner one seventh of the town and country communities including 9% of the town and country population, are without Protestant churches. There are thirty three thousand eight hundred and eight other communities or 42% which have no resident pastor. Only 21% of the rural communities or 28%

of the population have churches with full-time resident pastors. In some regions these figures would show a much better situation than actually exists. Taken as a whole only 15% of town and country churches have full-time resident pastors. 26% are on two-point circuits, 19% are on three-point circuits, while 25% of the ministers have four charges or more.

From the point of view of the number of churches the country over, it would seem at first glance that the churches are pretty well distributed as to the classes of communities they serve. But when we look at it from the point of view of the number of pastors giving their full time to one place, we see that a great deal of efficiency is lost. Besides one man having many churches to look after, there are other ministers in the same territory. They cross each others trail nearly every day. It is made impossible for any such ministers with their time and attention so divided to do a thorough piece of work. When we take the number of ministers into consideration we can see the real problems of the rural church. If each community were given one minister, thirty four thousand one hundred and eighty one more would be needed,¹ but one difficulty is that the country churches cannot support the ministers they have at present. A better distribution of existing church strength and ministerial personnel and a better method of operation

¹Morse and Brunner--"Town and Country Church in the U. S."

is badly needed.¹

Thus far the figures which we have been considering have been for the nation as a whole. We shall now proceed to consider more specifically a smaller territory. Morse and Brunner made a special study of one hundred seventy nine counties which are representative, and which were chosen because in many cases a considerable part of the data had been available in these instances, studies having been made of them previously.

These one hundred seventy nine counties have five thousand five hundred and fifty two Protestant churches with three thousand three hundred and fifty three ministers. The following chart is one which will show more definitely the regions in which the churches are found, and will also give the number of ministers and the number and percentage of those serving only part-time.¹

DISTRIBUTION OF CHURCHES AND MINISTERS
of the 179 counties.

Region	Total Churches	Total Ministers	Part-time Number	Ministers Per cent
Colonial	860	511	105	20.7
South	2,415	1,357	634	41.1
South-west	290	169	83	49.1
North-west	160	107	8	7.5
Mid-west	1,146	714	164	23.
Prairie	56	43	12	27.9
Range	275	196	33	16.8
Pacific	350	256	45	17.6
Total	5,552	3,353	1,104	32.9

¹Morse and Brunner--"Town and Country Church in the U. S."

The average number of people for each church in these counties where the special study was made was four hundred sixty three. That would truly be a happy circumstance if it existed all over the nation in somewhat the same proportion. The fact is, however, that in some parts there is one church for every hundred and sixty three of the inhabitants, while in other instances there are nearly twelve thousand inhabitants being served by one little church. Where the population is thickest there are more churches in proportion to the population. This tends to make the population centers overchurched and the sparsely settled places underchurched. The following chart from Morse and Brunner gives a clearer idea of this general tendency.

County pop. per sq. mi.	No. people per church
11--20	460
21--30	422
31--40	415
Over 40	405

In many instances the parishes overlap to a striking degree while in other instances the unworked territory between parishes is vast. Often times the parishes of the same denomination overlap. Only a few denominations have even a theoretically consistent or well developed parish system. The Episcopal Church has a parish plan in theory, but often men's theories are not carried out. There are many small churches that have either stood still or actually lost in membership. In a study by Gill and Pinchot,

"The Country Church", they discovered that between 1890 and 1910 the church membership of two counties they studied increased only 3% on the average. In Tompkins County, New York, the increase was only 2% while the actual giving has gone down as much as 9% in the same period. Many churches aided by missionary funds have lost from 35% to 40% in membership.¹ According to Morse and Brunner the interdenominational or federated churches seem to be doing the best both in the greater percentage of resident pastors and in respect to areas covered. According to data that they gathered, a church with a resident pastor has a reach nearly three times as great as one without. The union of churches makes for a greater number of resident pastors and therefore increases efficiency in almost every way.

The United States government takes the church census at the same time as the regular census.

"The census figures for 1926 bring out the magnitude of the church enterprise in this country. According to the latest returns there are two hundred and twelve separate denominations having two hundred thirty two thousand churches and about forty five million members over thirteen years of age. Denominational Sunday Schools have an enrolment of more than twenty one million pupils, and even this figure excludes the pupils of undenominational Sunday Schools..... property values besides ministers' residences are three billion eight hundred million dollars, while for 1926 the total expenditure for local churches amounted to eight hundred and seventeen million dollars. Such figures testify to the im-

¹Gill and Pinchot-- "The Country Church".

portance of the churches in American life..... The two hundred and thirty two thousand churches compare with two hundred and fifty six thousand public school buildings. The total number of twenty one million Sunday School scholars is less only by three million seven hundred thousand than the pupils in all the public elementary and secondary schools. The annual church expenditures of eight hundred and seventeen million dollars, are as large as the expenditures of public schools. Clearly organized religion is an enormous enterprise."¹

It is due to the missionary spirit that the number of churches and members have grown to such an extent. It is interesting to compare the state of affairs in the country and city areas.

"Since the 1926 census tabulated for the first time rural and urban figures separately, it is now possible to indicate certain of the differences between city and country churches. The average rural church has ninety eight adult members who worship in a church building worth almost sixty two hundred dollars, and who expend annually fourteen hundred dollars, or thirteen dollars and twenty seven cents for each member thirteen years of age or over. On the other hand, the average city church has a reported adult membership of four hundred and thirty three; its church edifice is worth fifty three thousand five hundred dollars, and its annual expenditures amount to ten thousand dollars or twenty one dollars and fifty cents for each adult member."²

Not only are there fewer members on the average in the rural churches but many churches have only a few people, often not over one or two dozen. Besides their membership being so small the people in the rural districts cannot pay

¹Fry-- "The United States Looks at Its Churches". pp.1-2.

²Ibid. p.2

as much per capita as people in the city; in fact they average only about three fifths as much per capita as members of urban churches. This makes one of the greatest problems of the rural church.

"The census returns stress the diversity of organized religion in this country..... Most of the denominations are small, more than half having adult memberships of less than seven thousand. All bodies, even the larger ones, are highly concentrated geographically. There are only three bodies, the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Protestant Episcopal Church, and the Roman Catholic Church, which have as many as three congregations in every state in the Union."¹

The spirit of disunion has certainly possessed us in the past. However, there has been spreading abroad in the last few years a spirit of union and brotherhood. Possibly we are doing away with the spirit of disunion. In the decade between 1916 and 1926 no fewer than eighteen denominations were involved in mergers and amalgamations, while only one organization split in two.² Since 1926 there have been other unions of major denominations which have come to my attention.

"Of all the institutions concerned with the building of rural civilization none has received more attention in recent years than has the rural church.....Less attention has been paid to the religious life of the people than to the welfare of the institution intended to conserve that life."³

¹Fry-- "The United States Looks at Its Churches". p.2

²Ibid. p.2

³Vogt--"Introduction to Rural Sociology". p.310

Our emphasis has to be put upon the person and not upon the institution. Institutions are necessary in this day and age but they are not more important than men. Vogt and Fry both tell us that there is about one church member to every two people in the United States, and as Vogt puts it, "Rural figures are not so gratifying".¹ He asks us, "Where are the young people?" and gives this chart to show his meaning:²

"Membership Distribution According to Age

30 years and over-- 60.1%

Under 30 years-- 39.9%

Population Distribution According to Age, 1900

30 years and over-- 48.8%

10 to 30 years-- 51.2%"

Anyone with eyes can see the implications. It means that the church is losing the younger people. They are the church of tomorrow and unless we win them today we will not have them tomorrow. In many places according to Vogt the church members under thirty years of age amount to only 30% or less of the congregation. He says that approximately 50% of the church membership should be under thirty years of age. What will the rural church of the future be unless the church now reaches its young people?³

¹Vogt--"Introduction to Rural Sociology". p.313

²Ibid. p.318

³Ibid. p.319

Some hold that competition is necessary in church life. As far as young people are concerned, however, they are very often found to be disgusted with the condition as it stands. They are found to express themselves in a similar manner to Vogt, who says, in speaking of this competition,

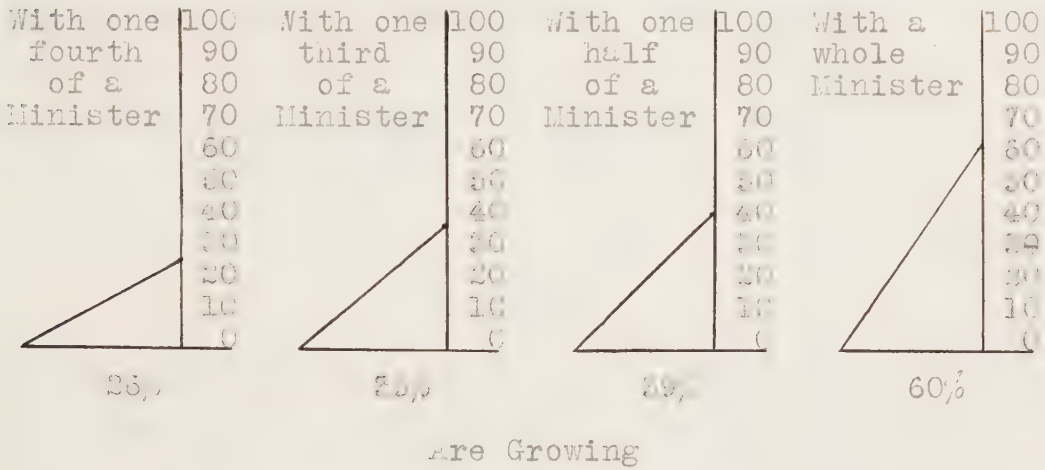
"This attitude which does not find expression in the public school organization, nor in the organization of the Post Office, or other community affairs, aids in perpetuating an essentially bad condition and prevents the enlargement of the ideals of religious agencies to include the entire community."¹

It is this thing that the young people talk about and are dissatisfied with. They cannot understand the argument from some of us, that there need be a dozen varieties of small churches in a small town or village because there are so many types of temperaments among the people. Many small churches means many absentee pastors because one pastor must serve several charges. Religious work cannot be accomplished by absent treatment as it is too often attempted, in our rural churches especially. The little chart which follows is the result of a study made by the "Ohio Rural Life Survey". It covers nineteen counties but holds generally the country over. It shows that it is difficult for a part of a man to do a whole man's work.²

¹Vogt--"Introduction to Rural Sociology". p.319.

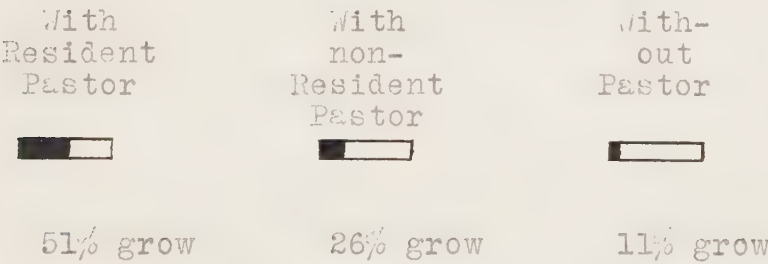
²Ibid. p.555.

Ministerial Vivisection and the Growth of Churches
Study Includes 1190 Churches



This next chart shows how much difference there is between the growth of a church with a resident pastor, a church with a non-resident pastor, and a church without a pastor.¹

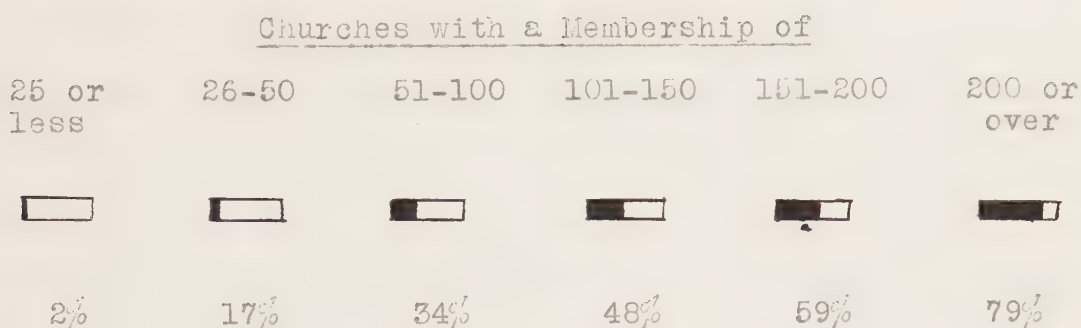
Failure of Absent Treatment



There is a direct relation between the growth of churches and their size. Small churches don't grow nearly as fast proportionately as large ones do. The following chart

¹Vogt--"Introduction to Rural Sociology". p.326

is one that Vogt gives:¹



Grow

Ohio has thirteen hundred and eighty eight townships and eleven hundred and seventy of them are rural. These rural townships have in all, six thousand and sixty churches and nearly one million seven hundred thousand people. Each township has on an average, a population of fourteen hundred forty eight, with five churches, or one church for every two hundred and eighty people.² On the whole, the data would indicate weak churches, small and with less than one hundred members. Churches with such a small membership don't grow very much. In Ohio more than forty five hundred, or 66% of the rural churches have less than one hundred members; thirty six hundred or 55% of the rural churches have less than seventy five members; twenty four hundred or 37% have less than fifty members. The membership is small but the attendance is smaller-- less than half of the mem-

¹Vogt-- "Introduction to Rural Sociology". p.326

²Gill and Pinchot-- "6000 Country Churches". p.8

bership.¹ In one entire township, for instance, of eight churches there was not one church that reported an average attendance of twenty five. Three hundred and seventeen rural townships or twenty seven per cent of them did not have a single resident pastor when the survey was made. Forty four hundred, or two thirds of the churches in rural Ohio are without resident ministers, according to Gill and Pinchot. In the open country only 13% of the churches have resident pastors. Out of sixty six hundred and forty two churches in the rural townships of Ohio, more than five hundred of the churches have less than a full-time minister. Thirty seven hundred and fifty five churches have only one third of a minister's time or less. Twenty five hundred have one fourth of a minister's time or less, and seven hundred and fifty churches have no regular services at all.

Besides there being this terrible condition in the rural sections of Ohio and elsewhere, it seems that where there are least resident pastors the turnover of ministers is surprisingly rapid. In the largest conferences in Ohio, only 26% of the ministers had been at their charges as long as two years or more; 78% were in their first or second year or service; 48% had just begun their first year's service, and only 1% of the ministers in rural Ohio had served five years or more. The ministers are shifted or shift

¹Gill and Pinchot-- "6000 Country Churches". p.8

themselves so often under such conditions that they cannot understand their parish conditions in the amount of time they stay, nor can they be understood at all. It is no wonder that such a statement as this needs to be made:

"In a region where the church has been active for a century it has failed to dispel ignorance and superstition.....The worst of moral and religious conditions go on in Ohio where churches are the thickest."¹ (One church to one hundred and seventy eight people).

The legitimate church has so weakened itself in one way or another, especially by sectarianism dividing it, that religious emotionalists such as the Pentacostals and other similar groups with ignorant ministers have the people in their sway. They have a continuous succession of hilarious and superstitious revivals (fifty or more a year), which almost exclude the possibility of a united and strong church in those sections. The religion that is the result of such revival meetings is not interested in this world at all, and in almost every instance divides the community instead of uniting it in any enterprise. In a section of one hundred and fifty square miles, in 1917, an area with sixteen hundred children between six and twenty one years of age there was no church influence exerted except by Pentacostals. It is no wonder that these churches won't cooperate with other churches, because in one of the districts, one half of the thirty ministers never had a common-school

¹Gill and Pinchot-- "6000 Country Churches". p.9

education. "Some cannot write their names correctly."¹

Thousands of people do not have the opportunity of hearing a minister or attending a church other than the emotional type in which many ministers have practically no education. Many people are ashamed to go to such a church. It is no wonder that in rural Ohio as in other places where this type of religion has displaced a more reasonable type, degeneracy has set in. Religion of the emotional type, which has no other services than continual revival meetings, following each other so rapidly that they are practically always in the process of one such meeting, is likely to lose its edge now and then. When it loses its appeal for some people they have to find expression in some other way. Often times this leads to immoral behavior.

"The roots of the religious and moral life of the nation are chiefly in the country church. As in southern Ohio, so in any area where the church fails, degeneracy begins."

Wilson speaks of "Holiness churches like unto dervishes"² seeming to indicate the need in the country for a church adapted to the needs of the country. In the face of facts such as these, it is very discouraging to report the arrest or decadence of country churches. Religious institutions

¹Gill and Pinchot-- "6000 Country Churches". p.21

²Ibid. p.40

³Wilson-- "The Farmer's Church". p.38

connected directly or indirectly with the farmer are in the majority of instances on the decline. Protestant as well as Catholic, Methodists highly organized, as well as Baptists independent, are losing ground.¹ Wilson insists further, that the need is very great for young well trained men who have consecrated themselves to life in the country, to elevate and help it in every way possible. One of the chief causes of the present condition of rural churches is an imperfect conception of their function.² Churches in order to be successful, have to win a major part of the attention of the people and not a minor part. At one time in this country preaching almost of itself could hold people, because there were not many competing agencies for the time of the people.

In the mission field it has been found necessary to use other methods than the preaching of the Gospel alone. In lands to which Christian missionaries go the missionaries are accompanied by missionary doctors and mission hospitals, etc. Schools are started and teachers, preachers, doctors, and nurses, are sent into the homes. All this is found necessary in foreign missions, while as in southeastern Ohio and in hundreds of other sections there is no attempt made to do anything but preach, and that under such condi-

¹Wilson-- "The Farmer's Church". p.38

²Gill and Pinchot-- "6000 Country Churches". p.40

tions as to be very unattractive.

The report of the failure of the church comes not only from one or two men but from every section. In a study of seven hundred churches, nearly half of them were found to have less than fifty members. No provision was made for the young people; no resident ministers; plants closed for six days a week and many of them not open on the seventh. Three fourths of the rural churches in America have less than half-time preaching services. Nine tenths of the rural preachers in three of the large denominations live outside the community they serve.¹ Alva Taylor gives six reasons why the church has failed with the farmers; the first is the ignorance of the ministry; the second the radio; the third, that the farmers get the best of cooperative literature by mail and the church practices division; fourth, tenant farmers; fifth, the church suffers by comparison with the cooperative schools; sixth, youth fails to see religion in overchurched fields, and especially where home missionary societies are spent in the competition of religious bodies.

Taylor, in the introduction to his book on rural sociology said that attention has only been paid intermittently to the farmer and his problem. To my mind the church that does nothing toward fitting itself into the

¹Taylor-- "The Church and Youth" in The Community Churchman, Sept. 1930.

needs of the farmers is a drag on the wheels of progress. It must be admitted that in the past, churches have been planted because it was the thing that was being done; the result is that we have so many churches that are not in a position to do a maximum good that many people are discouraged and have nothing more to do with the church as a whole.

"The church is one of the great social institutions in the field of definitely organized and thoroughly institutionalized life of society; it divides the field with the school, the home, government and business.....Since these five great social institutions are universal, the church must find its place in team work and cooperation with the other four."¹

The presence of a church is, however, no sure index of religion. Taylor's answer to what is the matter with the rural church he gives as follows: (1) sectarianism or denominationalism; (2) poorly trained preachers; (3) poor church programs; (4) poor church equipment; (5) lack of resident pastors; (6) poor support and the inevitable result (7) low membership and poor church attendance.²

In almost all of the articles and books read upon this subject I have found that studies have been made and some conclusions reached. Galpin has come to this conclusion: It is the small, weak pastorless church, which is not advantageously located, that tends to surrender agriculture

¹Taylor-- "Rural Sociology" p. 212

²Ibid. p. 213

to destructive individualism. It is the strong church with a noble permanent architecture properly located, with a ~~careful selection of its members, and a careful selection of its members, and a~~ turn, nurtures the church.¹ How to produce these greatly desired results in the future development of the church without diminishing in any wise the religious fervor and enthusiasm is the problem presented to agriculture.

There is no question but that the last fifteen years have seen a growing demand for further cooperation among the home mission forces; the demand has come both from within and without the home mission movement. Scarcely a conference of importance has failed to pass resolutions favoring greater cooperation.² We have to realize that after all it is catholic practice that makes a church catholic. The talents that we have received must not be hidden; they should be used. Denominationalism has grown upon the false theory that if a group possesses some special truth or other Christian treasure the thing to do is to withdraw from others to preserve it. That fallacy lies at the root of sectarianism. The way to preserve any spiritual treasure is to contribute it; and the only way effectually to contribute it is to practice fellowship with other Christians, that is, to treat other Christians as Christ treats them.³

¹Galpin-- "The Farmer's Church an Economic and Social Force".

²Brunner-- "Facing Home Mission Facts". Christian Century, January 14, 1931. p.55.

³Editorial, Christian Century, January 1, 1931. p.6

If the church has failed in the world, she has failed at this point. The spirit of brotherliness which Jesus looked for in his disciples and upon which he staked the future welfare of his cause in the world, is not apparent in the institution that bears his name today. It has not been so for a thousand years. The whole tenor of the teaching of the New Testament is in praise of this virtue; the whole practice of Christian people contradicts it. This is the reason why countless numbers of people cannot now be interested in the enterprise of the Christian institution.¹

"The greatest scandal of civilization is that Christians have not learned how to behave toward each other.....Half of Christendom is not on speaking terms with the other half; separated by ignorance, suspicion, fear.....The test of Christianity is not in adorning Christ by many prayers nor in preaching Christ, proclaiming him 'very God of very God', but rather in showing that the behavior of Christians among themselves in the common everyday affairs of life is superior to the behavior of non-Christians among themselves-- not merely outward behavior, but an outward behavior that is the expression of the heart's spiritual attitude.....We have been saving denominationalism and not souls.

"Thus there has been given an abnormal growth to Christianity which found its climax through twenty centuries in the bitter fruit of the world war-- a war which afforded Christianity the most spectacular display of its false interpretation of religion. For this war was conducted by Christian emperors, Christian kings, and Christian presidents-- advised by Christian cabinets, Christian parliaments, Christian assemblies, and Christian congresses; led by Christian generals, fought by Christian soldiers, with Christian chaplains and supported by Christian churches.

¹McKinnon-- Methodist Review, Sept. 1929. p.641

Throughout the world in the greatest instance in human history of international lying and whole-sale murder, every moral standard was left lying in the dust and Christianity stalked forth as a skeleton of forms, deaf to the moral and social crimes of the world, but holding in its grip the denominational practices of more than two hundred parties in Christendom."¹

"If anyone's denominational position separates him from other Christians, or forbids other Christians to join his church unless they conform to his interpretations, or forbids them to come to the Lord's Supper because they are not of the same denomination, or denies oneness of a Christian of another group with his group there is something wrong in that attitude, because it is shot through with prohibitions against other Christians.....Does the fact that a Christian does violence to the principles of love and truth, by his attitude of the Pharisee, awaken no alarm in his own soul?.....Denominationalism has become respectable and respectability hides a multitude of sins.

"A church cannot be 'worldly' and 'spiritual' at the same time. It cannot be ordinary and at the same time, extraordinary.....The one test of discipleship which Jesus left for all ages was inclusiveness, expressed in the term 'Love'."²

¹Winslie-- "Scandal of Christianity". pp 2,4,5.

²Ibid. p.9 ff.

Chapter VII

Divisions Over Small Matters.

III

Divisions Over Small Matters.

In this section I am going to try to show that divisions have come into Christendom in a very odd way and that often times there is little or nothing more than superstition behind denominational divisions. It has not very often been over great issues about which Christian people have been split up into denominations, but really insignificant incidents have been made into insurmountable obstacles and the result has been an utterly unchristian spirit among Christian people in propagating the Gospel of Jesus.

Many argue today that we Americans are of such basically different temperaments that we need to have many different types of religions or religious demonstrations in order that everyone may truly worship God. If that is the case, it becomes necessary to explain why it is that the denominational groups are very largely localized. Only a comparatively small percentage of the denominations have churches all over the country. From that one might be led to believe that people of certain religious temperaments settle in certain localities. How they happen to get there we are not able to find out.

Some of the figures that show how many of the denominations are actually in active work in every state of the United States are helpful.

"Most individual denominations, even the large ones, are localized geographically. Relatively few bodies have a national distribution. There are only eight denominations that have at least one church in each state. These bodies are: the Seventh Day Adventist, the Church of Christ Scientist, the Jewish Congregations, the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, the Salvation Army, the Methodist Episcopal, the Protestant Episcopal, and the Roman Catholic Church. All but the last three denominations are very feebly represented in certain states in each of which they have only one or two churches. No state, however, has fewer than sixteen Methodist Episcopal churches, twenty four Protestant Episcopal churches, and thirty Roman Catholic churches.

"In all there are fifty eight denominations each of which has churches in at least one half of the states. This leaves one hundred and fifty four bodies, or nearly three fourths of the total with churches in not more than one half of the states, and seventy of these one hundred and fifty four denominations, or a third of the total, are localized in from one to six commonwealths, while eighteen are found in one state only.

"Because most denominations are localized geographically, it happens that there is no state in which the two hundred and twelve denominations all have churches. Illinois reports the largest number, with one hundred and forty four denominations having one or more churches there; but thirty nine states have in each case fewer than one hundred bodies represented, while in one half of the states this number is below seventy five.

"Even these figures hardly tell the full story of the extent of denominational consideration. In most states the majority of churches belong to a handful of denominations. In Illinois, for example, six bodies have a majority of

all the churches despite the fact that this state holds the record with churches representing one hundred and forty four denominations. The same situation, usually in a more accentuated form, prevails elsewhere. In every commonwealth except Illinois, Ohio, Michigan, Colorado, Washington, and California, fewer than six denominations have a majority of the churches. In twenty states over one half of the churches belong to three denominations or fewer, while in fourteen states this number is four. In the states listed below the majority of the churches belong to the number of denominations specified above each column."¹

1	2	3
Utah	Delaware Georgia N. Mexico	Maine N. Hampshire Vermont Rhode Island Connecticut Virginia N. Carolina S. Carolina Kentucky Tennessee Alabama Mississippi Louisiana Texas Idaho Nevada
4	5	6
Massachusetts New York New Jersey Missouri North Dakota South Dakota Maryland West Virginia Florida Arkansas Oklahoma Montana Wyoming Arizona	Pennsylvania Indiana Wisconsin Minnesota Iowa Nebraska Kansas Oregon	Illinois Ohio Michigan Colorado Washington California

¹Fry-- "The U. S. Looks At Its Churches." pp.32,33

All of this goes to prove that the various denominations are not meant to serve special types of people. Most churches serve almost every type of human being in existence. In certain sections churches are found to be very similar, or of two or three types because of something that has caused splits forming two or three groups. These groups are most often the results of local squabbles; the groups form new denominations and then they try to spread their particular type of difference from others.

The church in the United States, divided into twenty or more families which in turn have divided into about two hundred separate Protestant denominations. One Presbyterian denomination has only twenty two churches with seven hundred and eighty six members. Of the Methodist family, six denominations have less than ten thousand members each, and four have less than five thousand each. Six Baptist denominations have less than ten thousand members each, some having only two hundred members. Nine Lutheran denominations have less than ten thousand members. These are the conditions in some of the larger families of churches; conditions are even worse in many of the smaller families.

Many of the main denominations have southern and northern branches with the same fundamental polity and doctrine. The separations were over an issue which has been settled for approximately sixty five years.¹ They have no reason

¹Sims-- "What Must the Church Do to Be Saved?" p.37

for being separated now; in fact if they were actually to try to state valid reasons why they are separated they would find that it was almost all a matter of history.

Protestantism is not divided over fundamental doctrines.

We have about two hundred denominations with

"hardly a dozen doctrines between them and no denomination has a monopoly on one of them.....
...In the fundamentals Protestantism has always been agreed.....Divisions have always come over non-essentials; for instance, as to the essential decrees of God, or the number of times a man must be dipped in order to be baptized."¹

Some dip once in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost; others dip three times, once for each. In one denomination a brother washes the feet of another brother and then dries the feet himself. In another denomination, while one brother washes the feet, still another dries them. This is the question over which they divided. Neither regards the practice in either form as essential to salvation or Christian character.

The Dunkards of Pennsylvania divided over whether they should wear single buttons or double buttons. Another group divided on the question of whether buttons should be worn or not. One group wears buttons while the other wears hooks and eyes.

One Presbyterian body divided because it had a group which wanted to sing Psalms only, while another group wan-

¹Sims-- "What the Church Must Do to Be Saved?" p.38

ted to sing other hymns besides the Psalms. They divided and for a little time were happy and contented, after which more divisions took place. Many reformed churches are reformed over and over again, each reformation creating new denominations.. Many are giving their lives to make this sort of division no longer possible. We find, however, that to a large degree people are satisfied to allow things to go on as they have for generations, a thing that would be inconceivable in the manufacturing industry or in any up-to-date going business concern.

"We practice all these things in the name of religion and then we wonder why the world is not converted."¹

Merely the mentioning of some of the names of various denominations without comment gives us a picture of the senselessness of so many divisions. The reading of the names refutes the idea of division over fundamental doctrines. One is bewildered by reading them. Take the Baptist church for instance: We have the Northern Baptist Convention, the Southern Baptist Convention, the General Six Principle Baptists, the Seventh Day Baptists, the Free Baptists, the Free-will Baptists, the General Baptists, the Duck River, and kindred associations of Baptists, the Primitive Baptists, the Colored Primitive Baptists in America, the Two-seed-in-the-Spirit-Predestinarian Baptists, and the United American Free-will Baptists. These names should

¹Sims-- "What Must the Church Do to Be Saved?" p.40

suffice for Baptists. There are others still.

The Methodist bodies offer us the following kinds: (among its white churches) the Congregational Methodist Church, the Free Methodist Church, the Holiness Methodist Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, the Methodist Episcopal Church South, the Methodist Protestant Church, the New Congregational Methodist Church, the Primitive Methodist Church, the Reformed Methodist Church, the Wesleyan Methodist Church; (colored) the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion church, the African Union Methodist Protestant Church, the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, the Colored Methodist Protestant Church, the Independent African Methodist Episcopal, the Reformed Methodist Union Episcopal Church, the Reformed Zion Union Apostolic Church, and the Union African Methodist Episcopal Church.

The Lutheran Church family again illustrates how these divisions have become meaningless. Among them we find the Church of the Lutheran Brethren, the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Danish Lutheran Churches, the Evangelical Lutheran Augustana Synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Eielsen Synod), the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference, the Finnish Apostolic Lutheran Church, the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church, Suomi Synod, the Finnish Lutheran Churches, the Finnish Lutheran National

Church, the Icelandic Evangelical Lutheran Synod, the Independent Lutheran Congregations, the Joint Synod of Ohio and other states, the Joint Synod of Wisconsin and other states, the Lutheran Free Church, the Lutheran Synod of Buffalo, the Norwegian Lutheran Church, the Norwegian Synod, the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Synod, the Synod of Iowa and other states, the Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and other states, the United Danish Lutheran Church in America, and the United Lutheran Church in America.

We find the same story in the Presbyterian Church: For instance, the Associate Presbyterian Church, the Associated Reformed Presbyterian Church, the Colored Cumberland Presbyterian Church, the Cumberland Presbyterians, the Presbyterian Church of the United States, the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, the Reformed Presbyterian Church General Synod, the Reformed Presbyterian Synod, and the United Presbyterian Church of North America.

Besides all the separation that one finds in the various denominations one also find such names as the following which make us feel like giving up: the Church of God (Adventist), the Churches of God (Adventist), the Churches of God in Christ Jesus, the United Zions Children, the Church of God and the Saints of Christ, the Churches of God in North America, the Apostolic Faith Movement, the Hephzibah Faith Missionary Association, the Pentecostal Union Church,

the Apostolic Christian Church, the Heavenly Recruit Church, the Church of Daniel's Band, the Defenseless Mennonites, the non-Sectarian Churches of Bible Faith, the Pentacostal Church of the Nazarene, and other such pious sounding names.

Surely nothing is gained in this vicious reformation of every reformation. Enough has been done to separate and divide.

A great proportion of the difficulty has been due to ignorance. If Christian people were conscious of the real situation as it exists they would do more toward the abolition of useless competition which is based on some hurt feeling or some little misunderstanding which Christians should have been able to prevent anyhow.

This story is told of Mr. Huxley. He sat at dinner beside a lady who asked him whether he did not think it was bad business that the Rev. Mr. B. should have adopted the Eastward position of administering the Sacrament. Mr. Huxley replied: "My dear lady, I am told by Sir John Herschel that to drop a bean at the end of every mile of a voyage to the nearest fixed star would require a fleet of ten thousand ships, each of six hundred tons burden, all starting full of beans. Now do you really think that the Maker of those fixed stars considers this new position of Mr. B's a serious matter?"¹ Probably God, who runs the sun and stars is not interested in these petty different opinions

¹Sims-- "What Must the Church Do to Be Saved?" p.42

which we hold. Does our mode of baptism, or the number of buttons we wear, bother Him who guides Jupiter. He does not put the planets where they bother each other a great deal; and maybe He would not have two churches where one ought to be either.

In a meeting in Nashville, Tennessee, the Rev. Mr. Samuel Jones, a Methodist minister, turned to Dr. Witherspoon, a Presbyterian minister, who was with him on the platform and said in effect, "Dr. Witherspoon, if your mother and mine had swapped babies, you would be a Methodist minister today and I would be a Presbyterian."

This expresses a great truth. People most often do not sit down and reason out what they can accept and hold as their religious belief; they most usually go to a certain church because of a certain minister, or because of a sweetheart or a group of friends, or for any one of a thousand reasons. We meet many people who say that in the place from which they have recently come, they attended such and such a church; they went where they had friends or where it was most convenient. When they moved to a new location they very often changed their denomination, and that all without hurt of conscience. A man brought his son to the Golden Gate Methodist Sunday School. I conversed with him for a while during which time he told me that he was the son of a very devout minister of the southern branch of the Method-

ist Church, and that his father had been a circuit-riding presiding elder. He expressed himself in some such way as this: "It doesn't make any difference to which church you belong. The difference comes in your own life attitudes and actions. Over and over again this feeling has been expressed by all kinds of people in all classes of society, belonging to all varieties of denominations. It all goes to show that people are not bound as they used to be to a denomination. More than ever before are people willing to admit that the differences which were once the cause of separations are of minor and ignorable nature.

We are all trying to live essentially a good Christian life; and we are striving toward essentially the same goal. "We are paying too much for the luxury of being walled off from one another while we say our prayers."¹ This is not to say that we shall have no creed, in order to eliminate the difficulty in which the rural church finds itself.

"There is no such thing as a religion without a creed; every Christian therefore has a creed..... We have no sympathy with the tendency to depreciate creeds. But it is not necessary in order to have a creed that it should be written; it may be oral.....But if our creeds are to render their highest service they must be used as testimonies to the truth and not as tests of discipleship or ability to serve; they must be used as platforms on which we stand and not as pens enclosing all the truth; they must be used as flags under which we fight and not as magazines of ammunition. These will be the uses of the creeds of the future.....To require any sort

¹Sims-- "What Must the Church Do to Be Saved?" p.46

of creed subscription as a condition of church membership, unless the creed contain only what is required to make one a Christian, would be to require more for admission into the church than the Lord requires for admission into heaven.....

"There is no objection to creed subscription in itself; but creed subscription as it is practiced among all denominations is objectionable. Men are required to accept creeds containing many things which are not essential, either to salvation, character, or service.....

"Neither Presbyterians, Methodists, nor Baptists could ordain Martin Luther to the ministry if he were living. He could not be made an elder or deacon in the Presbyterian Church. And yet he is the father of Protestantism. Spurgeon, Wesley, and others would not find acceptance in many denominations.....That makes the first work of a minister to be a thing condemned by the New Testament in its every utterance and spirit. If denominationalism was not made of more importance than the Kingdom of God it would seem that a man who is a Methodist, or a Baptist in theology might be ordained to the ministry in the Presbyterian Church or in any other church."¹

Jesus was of the inclusive spirit, showing people how to "get on" in life, and not of the spirit which told men "where to get off".

The rural church is being looked toward for leadership today. In order to give that leadership it will have to give up its striving over insignificant issues. Rural America needs an indigenous church. In order for our rural church to contribute something worth-while to society it must fit itself completely and unreservedly to the needs of our rural population. The rural church has followed the

¹Sims-- "What Must the Church Do to Be Saved?" pp. 82,85, 91,97,98.

tradition of division too long. In order for her to meet this day successfully she must have a united front. In other words, she is going to have to come up more nearly to the following standards than she has come in recent years.

1. "The rural church must have adequate space, buildings, and working equipment, such as physical machinery and technologies, if it is to perform its task well.

2. "It must have a church leader, in the person of the pastor, who gives his whole time to the task, and to whom sufficient remuneration is given to guarantee an adequately trained man.

3. "It must have an efficient, organized business policy, which provides support for all programs of the church.

4. "Its meetings must be so organized and conducted as to furnish definite and religious direction to the lives of the members of the community.

5. "It must conceive of its parish as encompassing all classes and types of people whom it can bring within its influences.

6. "It must furnish religious education for the sake of training persons to carry on its program, and for efficient living in the community.

7. "It must have a program which challenges the interest and solicits the support of people of all ages, all sexes, and all types."

The following are points which Taylor puts into a "Par-Standard" for rural churches:²

¹Taylor-- "Rural Sociology". p.243

²Ibid. p.242.

Adequate Physical Equipment.

Up-to-date parsonage
 Adequate auditorium space
 Social and recreational equipment
 Well equipped kitchen
 Organ or piano
 Sunday School rooms
 Stereopticon or movie
 Sanitary toilets
 Parking space
 Good required property

Pastor

RESIDENT PASTOR
 Full-time pastor
 Service every Sunday
 Minimum salary \$1,200

Finance

Annual church budget adopted annually
 Every-member canvas
 Benevolences 25% as great as current expenses

Meetings

Cooperation with other churches
 Systematic evangelism

Parish

Church services for all racial and occupational groups.

Religious Education

Sunday School held the entire year
 Sunday School enrolment equal to church membership
 Attempt to bring pupils to church
 Special instruction for church membership
 Teacher training or normal class
 Provision for leadership training

Program of Work

Organized activities for age and sex groups

Program of Work (Continued)

Cooperation with boards and denominational
agencies
Church reaching the entire community."

The rural world needs the Christian Church today as it has never needed it before. The rural people in our country need the gospel message as they have not needed it for many years. The rural people need a united church and not a competing divided one. "All our churches must be genuinely Christian; then, and not until then, shall we have a United Church of Christ."¹

Thousands of thinking people are seeing the uselessness of a divided Christendom. Christian people are beginning to realize that minor differences need not keep them apart any longer. After all, the Christian life is more than the acceptance or rejection of this or that doctrine or religious practice. The rural youth of today are facing the problems caused by denominationalism and are asking if there is any reason valid for competition in the rural church. Young people and old alike, are seeing that the church should mean much more to the rural population than it does. Many can recall the days when the life of the rural community centered about the church. They are trying in every way possible to restore the church in the country to its place of prominence.

¹Ainslie-- "The Scandal of Christianity". p.211

Those who are interested in the welfare of the rural church are convinced that competition has spelled doom for the rural church; that it has been divisive and tapped the strength of the church. Since this divisive spirit which has done so much damage, is based not upon major but upon minor differences between Christians, there are thousands who would emphasize what Jesus emphasized. He put his emphasis on brotherhood and love. He was inclusive and not exclusive. With this feeling abroad, we can look hopefully into the future, knowing that as men see the truth they will be more and more liberated by it.

As our emphasis is put on "Whom" we believe instead of "What" we believe, we grow to understand each other much better. As the people in rural America understand each other better they will grow to cooperate religiously. Our hope is that the rural church will regain its high place and really be a lighthouse unto those who need it indeed.

"Not what, but Whom, I do believe,
That, in my darkest hour of need,
Hath comfort that no mortal creed
To mortal man may give;--

Not what, but whom!

For Christ is more than all the creeds,
And his full life of gentle deeds
Shall all the creeds outlive.

Not what I do believe, but Whom!

Who walks beside me in the gloom?
Who shares the burden wearisome?
And bids me look beyond the tomb
The larger life to live?

Not what I do believe,

But Whom!

Not what,

But Whom!"

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